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ROMANISM AND RATIONALISM
AS OPPOSED TO PURE
CHRISTIANITY.

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PREFACE.

THE following Discourse or Lecture, recently delivered at the instance of kindred Societies, first in Glasgow and then in Edinburgh, is now published at their joint request.¹ Both Societies are made up of the Sons of Ministers of the United Presbyterian Church, who combine chiefly to render help to widows and fatherless children of their own class; and both have been already productive of no small amount of good. Their claims may be pleaded on many grounds, and not least from the services rendered by the ministers of that Church, during its past history, to evangelical religion. Few denominations, it is believed, have hitherto been preserved more free from the extremes of error described in the following Lecture; and as this result, under God, can only be ascribed to Christian teaching, there arises an obligation to remember, in the per-

¹ See Appendix, p. 53.

sons of their relatives, those faithful men who have generally speaking received no superabundant earthly recompense of their labours. If the origin of this publication serve in any degree to attract denominational attention to a needful object, or if the matter of it confirm any reader in those vital truths which are now so rudely assailed from unexpected quarters, the writer will be abundantly rewarded.

In conducting the argument of the Lecture itself, it will be seen that no one author has been selected for special animadversion. It has been judged better to deal in general principles, and to leave the truth to be its own witness.

December 1862.



‘Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.’—MATT. xvi. 6.



THE history of the human race, considered as a religious development, is the history of a struggle on the part of Unbelief and Superstition against each other, or against that divine form of religion which is appointed to supplant both. Man is inexplicable, on any system of philosophy which does not afford large room for the working of a religious element in his being ; an element which, never long dormant, may at any time awake, and awe into subjection all the other principles of his nature. There cannot be a greater misconception of Christianity than to imagine that for the first time it introduces the religious principle into the history of the race, or the experience of the individual, and invests it with authority. There is a belief in the super-

natural ; a faith in things unseen and future before either Moses or Christ ; and the design of revelation is not to create in man a religious nature, but to rectify and control that religious nature which the Fall has not destroyed, but only perverted and cast loose from its true centre. The religious tendencies and workings of fallen humanity may all be comprised under the one name of *Superstition*,—a very unhappy name, as it throws no light upon the thing itself, but which may become significant to us if we regard it by a play upon its Latin etymology, as denoting the wreck of religion which has survived the Fall. Before the Fall, man's religious nature and tendencies rested in their proper object,—a God truly known, and loved both for what He was in himself, and in relation to the creature. The introduction of sin, being the introduction of darkness and error into man's views of God, destroyed love to Him, as seen in his own proper character ; and as the Fall also necessitated the assumption of a hostile or penal attitude on the part of God, it disturbed the flow of grateful affection which his benefits had before produced. Light and love, the twin principles of primeval religion, thus became darkness and fear, the presiding spirits of man's religion in his fallen state, and the chosen agencies whereby the dominion usurped over him by the Tempter was confirmed. The true God

was no longer known, and even if He had been known, He would not have been loved through the hardening influence of transgression, and the irritating effect of penalties upon a disobedient nature. But the religious principle in man remained active as ever, and the results of its operation, under the twofold influence of darkness and fear, were the manifold forms of ancient idolatry. Many theories have been framed to account for the origin of idolatry, such as these : that the gods were deified men ; that they were personifications of the powers of nature ; or that they were the creations of a poetical fancy. These theories are all radically worthless, because they overlook the working of the superstitious principle. This makes it inevitable that man should have a religion, and equally inevitable, since he cannot create a religion in the strict sense, that the object of his worship should be the original divine character, hidden indeed by ignorance, debased to the likeness of man himself, and even of inferior creatures, and withal darkened and overcast by fear, but everywhere preserving fragments of its original unity, vestiges of its deep truth, and shadows of its awful majesty. This view, which I cannot here develop at greater length, will explain the idolatries of Egypt, of India, and the East, of the classic nations of Greece and Rome, and likewise the paganism of the Teutonic races, as so many mis-

readings and distorted reminiscences of the one aboriginal faith of humanity. The institutions of priesthood and sacrifice, and the rites of lustration and purification, which, of course, cannot be referred to man's religion before the Fall, are probably to be traced to the usages of worship appointed by God after the Fall, which were practised by the founders of different nations according to tradition, and then handed down to their descendants to be misunderstood, depraved, and caricatured in the growing darkness.

The development and reign of superstition is the prevailing feature in the religious history of all nations. But there gradually arises—there exists in fact from the beginning—an antagonist influence by which superstition is limited and held in check. This is Unbelief. It manifests itself in two very different forms. There is a higher unbelief which attacks what is false in superstition; and a lower unbelief which attacks what is true. The higher is an effort of the religious principle to purify itself by the employment of reason. It lays open the inconsistency of the creed, of the rites, and of the ceremonial of superstition with the deeper religious principles on which it is itself based, and attempts a religious reform by abridgment, or simplification, or refinement of the vulgar faith. Such was the unbelief, or, if you will, the rationalism of Socrates and

his successors, in relation to the Greek paganism, and of other philosophers who flourished still later in the decline of the Roman Empire. The lower unbelief again attacks even what is true in superstition, its fear, its sense of guilt, its faith in the operation of unseen avenging powers ; and not liking to retain God in its knowledge, even in the dwarfed and degraded representations of superstition, seeks to explode all faith in his living agency and influential connexion with men. Such was the unbelief, or, if you will again, the rationalism, only darker and more ungenial, of Epicurus and his school, of the sceptics, and of many eminent persons, such as the elder Pliny, in the later ages of ancient heathenism.

This struggle between superstition on the one side, and unbelief, in its two forms, on the other, which I have alluded to as waged on the field of Greek and Roman paganism, has been carried on more or less in every false religion under heaven. Sometimes the one side has triumphed, sometimes the other. In the classical world, the prevalence of literature, on the whole, gave the victory to unbelief, and this also has been the case with the modern Chinese ; whereas the Hindoo system of superstition has kept its ground both against the serious and frivolous rationalism of its native impugners. In the Mahometan religion, as is well

known, there has been the same opposition of the devotees and the freethinkers, though the latter have always been in the minority. Among the ancient Jews, when superstition, adding to and corrupting a divine but imperfect religion, had overlaid and buried it, the same conflict arose between the disciples of superstition, the Pharisees, and the leaders of unbelief, the Sadducees ; of the latter of whom we cannot but believe that some at least were actuated, by higher than mere sceptical motives, and had the same keen sense of the errors of tradition which is displayed by the modern Karaites in rejecting the Talmud.

One of the most melancholy features in this struggle of superstition and unbelief among the religions of nature, is the total impossibility, by any series of such collisions and reactions, of restoring the true knowledge and worship of God. Before rationalism could effect this among such nations, two things would be necessary : first, that a superstitious system should contain at least all the elements of the true religion, and then that reason should be able to separate these unerringly from the corrupt admixtures by which they were overlaid. Each of these conditions is manifestly impossible, and it has even been found that the higher rationalism, however justly applied, by shaking the faith of the vulgar in religious notions and practices which

rested solely on tradition, has done the work of the lower unbelief, and led the way to absolute irreligion. Then again, after a triumph of this kind more or less extended, superstition has revived through the inherent necessity of satisfying in some shape the religious principle ; and by a natural reaction against the previous indifference, it has revived in a form more fantastic, more degrading, or more bloody than before. New conflicts are thus provoked, and the result is that superstition, frequently wounded and sometimes slain and buried, puts forth more revolting excrescences in place of its lost members, or rises from the dead to perform more strange and portentous antics than ever upon its fresh grave.

In the midst of this downward progress of the ancient world, with a frivolous unbelief ever becoming more impious, a generous unbelief ever more melancholy and despairing, and a superstition sitting over against both, and, like the priests of Baal, invoking its gods with more fanatical cries and barbarous lacerations, the great remedy was introduced, and the religion of Jesus, in the midnight of the world's spiritual history, began its course. The gospel was at once a perfect republication of the original religion—the religion of man as a creature ; and was a final development of the religion of mediation—the religion of man as a sinner. Everything that was precious among the relics of superstition was preserved ; while the

yearnings and longings of the human heart for deliverance from sin and return to God, which superstition could never meet, were gloriously satisfied. The incarnate God at once revealed and reconciled the Father ; and became the way, the truth, and the life ; the Light of the nations, the universal guide of the erring into the paths of peace. The moral basis of superstition was thus taken away ; and, at the same time, while everything that was well founded in the earlier unbelief was conceded, yet such was the evidence, both external and internal, of the divinity of the religion of Christ which it brought with it into the world, that scepticism also lost all rational foundation. Happy would it have been for mankind if, when the darkness thus passed away and the true light shone, all had been willing to walk in it and to continue in it, persuaded of the divine origin of Christianity, satisfied with its simple method of reconciliation to God through the incarnation and sacrifice of His own Son ; and while contented with nothing less, aiming at nothing more, than to pay the grateful debt of obedience to the God of redemption, and to walk in the exercise of love, and the performance of spiritual rites of worship with all the brotherhood who had been thus enlightened and sanctified. But alas ! the very depravity of human nature for which the gospel was the cure, not only hindered the action of that gospel, but reacted upon it, to deteriorate its

healing properties ; and the history of the so-called Christian world, is mainly the history of the joint attacks of superstition and unbelief upon Christianity ; just as the history of the world before Christ is the history of their attacks on one another. In this contest we cannot allow that either has any truth on its side, as we were willing, nay, bound to do, before the advent of the gospel. Every true religious want of man is met by Christianity ; and there is no room for superstition to enlarge with its human and incongruous additions. Every part of Christianity is divinely authenticated and symmetrically coherent, meeting some religious want ; and there is no room for unbelief with its negative criticisms and mutilations to take any part away. Hence we shall unhesitatingly regard superstition and unbelief, in relation to Christianity, as both perverted manifestations ; the one being more the perversion of the heart through fear ; the other, the perversion of the understanding through pride ; and without going here into any more refined analysis of their nature and tendency, shall speak of them as while both radically mistaking Christianity, yet mistaking it in opposite directions, the one labouring more to corrupt it by false appendages, the other to destroy it by unauthorized curtailments and simplifications. And in the remainder of this lecture, the plan which I shall follow is to select the salient aspects of Christianity as a religion, and after show-

ing in general how every one of these aspects meets some essential religious want of our nature, to exhibit the operation of the two hostile influences as equally mistaking the gospel provision for the want in question, and as abridging it by defect or overlaying it by excess. I shall, in this lecture, forbear to speak of any other superstition or unbelief than wears the Christian badge and name. Hence my illustrations must be drawn chiefly, on the one hand, from the heresies of the Christian Church, these being mostly products of that unbelief which, as arising from the false application of reason in rejecting what is genuine and vital to Christianity, is commonly called *Rationalism*; and, on the other hand, from the corruptions of the Church of Rome, which is the finished development of *Superstition*. It is not a sketch which I am to attempt of the struggle of pure Christianity with open infidelity, or with such foreign superstitions as Mahometanism or Mormonism; but of the intestine war with each series of evils within her own pale.

According to the scheme thus laid down, I shall now proceed to consider the reaction of Rationalism and Superstition upon Christianity, in *four* points of view; *first*, as a system of revelation; *secondly*, as a system of mediation; *thirdly*, as a system of morality or sanctification; and, *fourthly*, as a system of spiritual association and fellowship.

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I. Look, then, *first*, to Christianity as a *system of Revelation*. If anything can be regarded as proved beyond reasonable dispute by the history of the world's religions, it is the necessity of some revelation that should dispel the uncertainties of all honest inquirers respecting God's nature and designs, and man's duty and destiny, and correct those deplorable mistakes into which few will deny that superstitious forms of religion have fallen. There must be some voice of God, some oracle, some heaven-descended truth superseding all other oracles, prophecies, or alleged divine communications, by bearing visibly on its front that evidence of celestial birth which they cannot produce. Now Christianity *is* such a revelation, proved to be divine by its indubitable miracles and prophecies, by its godlike tone and style, and by the superhuman greatness, depth, and wisdom of its contents. Further, it was necessary that this revelation should be in a book, and that book complete and entire, otherwise there would have been no definite standard, and no security against change in the transmission of the divine message from age to age. Now the Christian Scriptures form such a book, attested by sufficient evidence to be the genuine, uncorrupted, unmutilated depository of such a revelation. And once more, it was necessary that this book, while refusing to bend to human reason, should be capable of interpretation by human reason, and *that*

of every individual man, as a message from God to *him*, for the understanding and right use of which he alone was responsible ; and such a book the Bible is, asserting its own absolute infallibility, and yet leaving its interpretation to all who ‘ seek out the law of the Lord and read.’ A supernatural communication, a perfect canon, a self-interpreting Bible : these seem to be the three great wants of man in regard to revelation, which Christianity, as a system of revelation, fully meets and satisfies.

Look, now, at the way in which Rationalism and Superstition have in turn dealt with these three foundation-principles of Christianity as a revelation. Rationalism, even within the Church, has advanced so far as to deny that Christianity is a communication from God in any supernatural sense at all. To this startling length the divines of Germany, commonly called Rationalistic, while professing to believe in Christianity as from God, have, for more than half a century, now gone. It is the first time, so far as I am aware, in the history of Christianity, that such a denial has been connected with the Christian profession ; and that alleged disciples of Jesus and his apostles have maintained that he and they only spoke in God’s name as Zoroaster or Mahomet, or any other person of strong natural religious temperament and sensibilities. This denial of all miraculous influence at the birth of Christianity has found favour

with some of our English Unitarians, as well as with their brethren in America ; and it almost seems as if the disciples of Priestley and Channing, who, whatever their other shortcomings, at least held Jesus for the divinely-inspired prophet of immortality and something more, were about to discard their old teachers, and to regard the Saviour as divested not only of divinity, but of divinely-enlightened humanity, at least humanity divinely enlightened in any other sense than were Socrates and Plato, or the idols of modern hero-worship, whose names I shrink from pronouncing in conjunction with His who comes from heaven, and is above all.

While Rationalism has only lately, and in certain quarters, among which I grieve to have to speak of the Church of England, proceeded to cast off altogether the supernatural claims of Christianity, it has long, and in many directions, endeavoured to shake the authority of the received Bible as in all its parts an authentic record and perfect canon. I shall not enter into details on this subject. Generally speaking, for it would be uncandid to make the assertion universal, the denial of the canonical authority of certain parts of the Bible has sprung from a reluctance to accept their testimony to doctrines opposed to Rationalism. Thus, as the Sadducees of old rejected the books posterior to those of Moses, because they taught the doctrine of a future life, so the Ebionites of

the second century disowned the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke because they taught our Lord's miraculous conception, which these religionists denied; and nothing has been more common than for the so-called Rational divines of Germany, though here there have been honourable exceptions, to set aside books from the canon in the face of all evidence, because destructive of their tenets, just as a jurymen is summarily challenged by a counsel because suspected of an adverse leaning. Of this practice, unhappily, Luther set an example in rejecting the epistle of James, because he falsely supposed it to be inconsistent with justification by grace; and this unwarrantable act of his in this department, like the burning of Servetus by Calvin, has drawn after it a long train of evils, his name being employed to sanction on the Continent such wanton ejection of books and parts of books from the sacred Scriptures, as Luther would have been the last to rank within the bounds of fair inquiry and historical criticism.

But Rationalism not only denies the inspired authority of the Scriptures in general, or mutilates and abridges them by false processes of criticism: it exalts reason to a place in the interpretation of what remains and is acknowledged to be authentic, inconsistent with submission to the mind of God. If the starting-point or elementary idea of revelation is denied, it is not easy to allow the Bible to speak its

own language. What is supernatural and mysterious is in danger of being explained away, and the testimony of the Creator adjusted to the preconceived notions of his creatures. Thus how often has it been attempted even by Christian divines to explain the fall of man as an allegory, and the temptation of our Lord as a vision ; to account for the miracles of Moses, at least the passage of the Red Sea, and the descent of the manna in the desert, on natural principles ; and to resolve such moral miracles as the conversion of Paul into the reaction of the mind from one extreme to the other. It is matter of notoriety that eminent professors of Christian theology in Germany, sincere after their kind, have represented our Lord's death on the cross as only a swoon from which he recovered in the grave, and that others, in some respects orthodox, have endeavoured to render his mighty works more credible by supposing him to be endowed with an extraordinary gift of animal magnetism. Some prophecies are admitted to deserve the name, but others are rejected as requiring too great a strain on faith ; and everywhere the mental habit of these divines, like a spring pressed down, tends to throw off the load of revelation externally cast upon it. As an example of how the peculiar doctrines of the Bible are likewise diluted or rejected, it may be mentioned that the eminent writer De Wette, who latterly recoiled from

his earlier extremes, maintains that there can be no atonement, because the Prodigal Son is represented as received without any ; though he might quite as well have maintained from that parable, that men return to God without any solicitation from Him at all. So is it with other doctrines : Satan is an oriental metaphor ; the Spirit of God is a personification and not a person ; and sin is a necessary transition from a lower to a higher moral state, which, when it has served its purpose, shall be done away by Christ in all creatures. Thus what we regard as the plainest doctrines of the Bible are overruled and counter-checked by violent interpretation. Rationalism, for the most part, does not dare to say ‘That is the Bible doctrine, and it is absurd ;’ for this is the watchword of infidelity, though even here Rationalism and infidelity have lately shaken hands. It generally says, ‘If that were the Bible doctrine it would be absurd ;’ and then it proceeds to torture the plain language, to read between the lines, and to look at all the peculiarities of Christianity with the diminishing end of the telescope, until mountains become mole-hills ; and the only remaining wonder is, that strains so magniloquent should be employed by sacred writers to adorn such feebleness and commonplace as remains when the rugged grandeur of revelation has vanished. On this subject a volume might be written, and it would be a very melancholy one. The most

strained and unnatural constructions ever put by special pleaders upon human laws have, I grieve to say it, been exceeded in these interpretations of what is still called the Word of God; and the Christian Church still suffers from this refusal to accept the ordinary and literal meaning of Scripture as that which God intended, when he made use of human language, and directed his inspired agents to use all plainness of speech.

If we now turn from this misuse of the revealed Word, we shall see how widely superstition has erred on the opposite side. If Rationalism leaves only a minimum of inspiration, superstition in the Church of Rome affords a surplus. The fatal error of that Church, so far as Scripture is concerned, consists in claiming for the Church in all ages that inspiration which only belonged to the days of prophets and apostles. Hence, *three* signal mistakes exactly opposite to those of Rationalism. For, *first*, the inspired Bible is received not on the ground of its own supernatural evidence, but because the Church vouches for it as the Word of God. And *secondly*, the Church in the exercise of this usurped power has seriously corrupted the Bible which it professes to guard, adding to it the legends of the Apocrypha, and sanctioning all the errors and mistranslations of the Vulgate as of equal value with the original, and further exalting to a co-ordinate rank with the written Word the

whole mass of tradition as floating in ecclesiastical usage, or as embodied in the canons of councils, so that the Romanist Bible is voluminous, unfixed, and infinite, comparable almost to a Serbonian bog, in which the true Scripture is dragged down and sunk by the leaden and earthy matters to which it is attached. And *thirdly*, the Church denies to this Bible, thus placed on a wrong foundation, and thus falsely enlarged, all power of self-interpretation, and refuses to her laity and even her inferior clergy all unfettered liberty to read it, and much more to judge of its meaning for themselves, reserving to the infallible oracle in the Church, wherever that may be situated, the exclusive power of determining its sense, unbound by any rules or principles of ordinary interpretation which they are competent to apply in self-defence. It thus appears that Rationalism and superstition, starting from diametrically opposite points, tend to almost the same result so far as the strict idea of revelation is concerned. The last word of the one is, "The Bible is not wanted:" the last word of the other is, "The Bible is not sufficient." Both agree in denying its authority, its perfection, and its use. Both invest it with the honours of royalty; and then retract the homage, while they smite it and lacerate it and pierce its most sensitive organs, leaving it, indeed, the name of a revelation, but denying it the reverence due to a final and conclusive message from

God. There is no remedy for these evils in the struggle of Rationalism and Superstition with one another. They will never compromise their differences in a just assent to the claims of the Bible as the middle term between them. That just assent—in other words, Christian faith—can only come from a higher region ; and till the Spirit of God be poured out to enlighten men in their need of a message from heaven, and to open their eyes to the claims of the pure unadulterated Word, so long will Rationalism and Superstition pass the Bible by on opposite sides, or only appeal to it to confirm the dictates of reason, or to strengthen the foregone conclusions of authority. There is this point of accordance in their apparent conflicts—a common preference of the human to the divine, and it would be to take an unphilosophical view of human nature to imagine that these forces will ever neutralize each other, like the height of one wave and the hollow of another, so as to leave a smooth sea whereon the bark of revelation may glide along to convey its heaven-sent treasures.

II. The *second* aspect of pure Christianity in which I now proceed to consider the joint effects of Rationalism and Superstition upon it, is as a *system of Mediation*. The mediatorial scheme is the essence of Christianity. ‘No man cometh unto the Father but by me.’ To us ‘there is one God, and one Mediator

between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.' The deep-felt want of mediation in the human breast is written on the history of all false religions, and is the great truth which they all embody. Priests, sacrifices, intercessors, solemn rites of prayer by selected individuals holier than their fellows, are all due to this felt derangement of man's relations to God, and are an imperfect kind of mediation—a deep confession of the need of it rising from the inmost heart of humanity. Perhaps it may be said without presumption, that no revelation would meet man's need, if it did not provide *three* things: a genuine scheme of mediation, a scheme visibly complete, and a scheme easily available. These three qualifications are united in the Bible system. There is a genuine mediation by the incarnation of the Son of God as God's delegate and man's representative. There is a visible completeness in his work as Mediator, for his obedience and sufferings stand in relation to God as a full and perfect sacrifice and atonement, the efficacy of which is no mystery, but obviously rests on his dignity as God, imparting to his righteousness an unlimited worth for man's redemption. And there is the most direct availableness of this work of the Mediator for acceptance with God, inasmuch as it is the *faith* of the sinner, and not any more difficult requirement which is laid down as the means of justification. An incarnate God, a perfect righteousness, a free justifi-

cation ; this is the glorious threefold cord of the Bible system of mediation. Observe now how Rationalism loosens the fibres of that cord, and how Superstition, seeking to incorporate and interweave fresh threads with them, in effect equally destroys their texture. And first of Rationalism.

Rationalism denies and eliminates from the Bible the true and proper basis of mediation—the divinity of the Mediator. Hence result all the forms of the Arian heresy, as this prevailed in the fourth and fifth centuries in the ancient churches ; in the beginning of the eighteenth century in England, both in the Church and among Dissenters ; and on the Continent, in France, Germany, and Holland, to our own times. Socinianism is but the logical result of the Arian premises, and hardly does more violence to Scripture, while it pays more homage to reason. The modes of belief which corrupt the great doctrine of the Incarnation are innumerable. But they all equally conflict with mediation in the true and proper sense. If it be not God himself that has laid hold of humanity in the person of Christ, the gulf is not overleaped. There is a show of mediation ; but there is after all nothing but higher creatures exerting themselves for lower, and they do not effectually lay their hand either on the offended God or the offending sinner.

Further, Rationalism destroys the visible completeness of Christ's mediation by mutilating the Scripture

doctrine of atonement. This has been done in a great variety of ways. Either the atonement is in substance denied, and then Christ is a mere prophet or king, a sufferer but not an atoner, which is the common Socinian doctrine; or the atonement is represented as a display simply of love without any vindication of justice, which is the view of the German divine Schleiermacher and his followers, and of Mr. Maurice and others among ourselves; or it is regarded as a suffering for sinners accepted for them by God's mere good will and pleasure, without any visible reason for its employment, the opinion of many English divines of the last century. Now, it is obvious that in all these cases, the essential property of atonement, the bearing of penal displeasure against sin by a substitute qualified to bear it, is left out; and not less the rendering of honour to the law by the obedience of such a substitute. The doctrine of a moral adaptation in the sufferings and obedience of a divine person, who acts as a substitute for sinners, to lay the foundation of their escape from wrath and admission to glory, is repudiated or slurred over; and thus there is no visible completeness in the Mediator's work, no point of repose for a guilty conscience, nothing to justify the cry of victory on the cross, 'It is finished!' or to make the way into the holiest of all more manifest. Christ is the herald of reconciliation, but not the author of it; or if the nominal

author, there is no coherence between His work and its results.

The *third* essential property of the Bible scheme of mediation, as not only genuine and visibly complete, but likewise easily available, is also compromised by a Rationalistic theology. Instead of immediate and free justification, on the ground of the atonement and righteousness of the Mediator, Rationalism brings in more difficult, and, indeed, impracticable conditions. For grace, it substitutes merit ; for faith, works ; and the less that it gives to the Mediator the more does it ascribe to the sinner ; either the performance of the duties of a mitigated law, which Christ has died to lower, or sincere obedience to the 'law as the means of being benefited by the work of Christ, or at least the exertion of faith as a meritorious work, which from its own virtue justifies the soul. Thus the availability of Christ's mediation as open to all from the beginning, and as requiring only a simple act of reliance to place every believer under its gracious shadow, is fatally interfered with ; and the essential freeness of justification, the living pulse of the apostolic Christianity, and the vital breath of the revived gospel of the Reformation, is so clogged and pressed down by the dead weight of self-righteousness, that the gospel becomes another gospel, and ceases to be the gospel of Christ.

So much for the blindness of Rationalism to all that

is distinctive and glorious in the gospel scheme of mediation, as regards its basis, its essence, and its mode of being turned to account. Not less injuriously does Superstition misconstrue and pervert this grand system. It cannot be said, indeed, that Romanism, which may here be taken as the type of all other superstitions, denies and sets aside in express words, the Mediator, any more than it denies and sets aside the Bible. But with its uniform fatal tendency to add and supplement, it obscures and virtually nullifies the essence of Christianity. There is *first*, a fundamental doubt in the entire Romish system of the *genuineness* of Christ's mediation, a doubt opposite to that of Rationalism ; for while Rationalism explains away the Saviour's divinity, Romanism mistrusts his humanity, and introduces the Virgin, the saints, and even the angels, as nearer and more familiar mediators than Christ, which would be utterly impossible if the doctrine of his true manhood were held in its fresh simplicity, according to the Bible representations of the incarnation. The deepest principle of superstition thus comes to light—distrust of God ; and hence Godhead coming near in Christ arrayed in the living and warm attractions of human love is disbelieved and recoiled from, and the natural heart still seeks to break the awful distance, by throwing in other mediatorial agents at successive intervals. On another side the same doubt of the genuineness of mediation is

expressed in the place assigned to the priesthood. The felt need of something *human* between man and God, in addition to the humanity of Jesus, obviously discredits that humanity, and thus militates against the true faith of the incarnation.

Not less is the visible *completeness* of the Mediator's work imperilled and vitally injured by Romish superstition. I need not dwell on a subject so well known as the so-called sacrifice of the Mass. The other mis-shapen features of that tenet I shall not touch on. I only remark that the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which is so far a counterfeit of the mystery of the Incarnation, visibly imports that that incarnation once for all was not complete; and that the offering up of this transubstantiated Christ in alleged sacrifice by a self-styled priesthood, as visibly imports that his offering of himself on the cross once for all was no valid and conclusive atonement. The repetition of the sacrifice as under Judaism is a confession of its incompetency; and the so-called elevation of the Saviour in the host is thus in truth his deepest degradation. His righteousness also, as the ground of justification, is fatally trenched on by the ascription to the Church of a treasury of merit, such as the supererogatory works of saints; and thus, partly by the sacrificial repetition, or I had almost said travesty of His own work, and partly by the juxtaposition of the works of creatures with his, the glorious complete-

ness of his divine atonement and obedience, as the essence of mediation and the basis of hope, is almost as entirely hid from view as in the systems of Rationalism.

Not less mournfully, perhaps even more so, is the *availableness* of Christ's mediation compromised in the Church of Rome. Something of the nature of a personal atonement is required in order to be interested in that of Christ ; penance, fasts, austerities, bead-rolls of prayer here, and purgatorial fires hereafter. Further, justification is adjourned to a distant day, until the sinner be advanced in goodness ; and in order to afford the possibility of a beginning and continuance of this development he must first come to the Church before he can reach the Saviour ; and he can obtain the seed of grace which will grow up and issue in his justification through her sacramental rites alone. The most superficial observer can discern how utterly destructive this legal and ritual justification is of the free grace of the gospel ; and will notice how extremes meet—the Rationalist recoiling from the cross as needless, and falling back on good works as *his* hope, the Romanist turning back from it as insufficient, and alighting upon the same makeshift, which is, indeed, the only resource of our blinded nature. Heathenism thus returns into Christianity under two kindred forms. The Rationalist says, 'Man must obey God for his own salva-

tion ;' the Romanist, 'Man must suffer for himself ere he can be saved.' The basis of the one is groundless confidence before God ; the basis of the other is groundless fear before him ; but they alike displace God's own scheme of mediation, and substitute for it, as a more effectual expedient, the efforts or the sufferings of man himself, thus recalling the weak and beggarly elements of paganism, which the appearance of Christ was designed for ever to supersede and sweep away.

III. I now proceed to speak of Christianity in the *third* place as a system of *Morality*, and shall endeavour to be still more brief than under the foregoing heads. What man needs, and what the Bible presents, is a system of morality which shall begin with adequate correctives to man's felt depravity, which shall supply irresistible motives to obedience, and which shall present a perfect rule or standard of excellence. The grand agent by whom depravity is corrected is the Holy Spirit. The grand motive to obedience is the love of Christ. The grand rule of perfection is the moral law, enjoining supreme love to God and equal love to man. None of these grand principles of evangelical Christianity but has suffered sore damage at the hands both of Rationalism and Superstition. Here I shall look at their effects simultaneously, and not, as before, in succession.

The influence of the Holy Spirit as the only source of regenerate character, the only adequate corrective of man's fallen tendencies, has been almost universally denied or overlooked by a Rationalistic Christianity. It was so in the Pelagianism of the fourth century; and in that period of English Church history which preceded Methodism, and of Scottish Church history known by the name of Moderate, the same deplorable omission very generally prevailed. The Christian virtues were expected to grow upon the stock of nature; and any change corresponding to the Bible ideas of conversion, such as a new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead, was decried as in the last degree mystical, enthusiastic, and fanatical. Now this Bible mystery which Rationalism then sought to cut away, Romanism has unnaturally overlaid and exaggerated. The need of such a change is not denied in that Church; on the contrary it is insisted on; but then unhappily it is bound and tied down to the outward forms of the Church, more especially to baptism; and the dogma of baptismal regeneration is the result. It is not saying too much to affirm that this doctrine in all its parts, which arrogates for an apostolically descended priesthood the power infallibly to transmit the Holy Ghost by external channels, is as injurious a claim with regard to that blessed agent as the profession to transubstantiate bread and wine into the body and blood, soul and divinity of the Saviour is

with regard to Christ. And the result here is the same as there, for superstition grasping at too much secures nothing ; and as the bloodless sacrifice of the mass has no power to take away sins, as its own repetition shows, so the regeneration of water has no power to change the heart, as the absence of external fruits, and even the apostasy of persons thus regenerated notoriously testifies ; and thus the likeliest effect of the *opus operatum*, the legerdemain of the spiritual magician, is to seal up its subjects in unregenerate security. It is hard to say whether a regeneration disclaimed by Rationalism, or a regeneration materialized by Superstition, is the most injurious misreading of pure Christianity. The same remarks apply to all the other sacraments of the Church of Rome, in which the grace of the Holy Spirit, admitted in words, is ignored in practice, and a meaningless external ceremony called a sacrament, which renews nothing, corrects nothing, is dignified with the name of a channel of sanctification.

The influences of the Spirit, in their genuine sense, being thus abstracted from Christianity, *its motives to holiness* fare no better. The grand and stupendous motive of gratitude which runs through the whole Bible, and is expressed in the words, 'We love him, because he first loved us,' has almost no place, either in Rationalism or Romanism. Rationalistic Christianity can only expatiate on the dignity of virtue, the

prospect of reward, the certainty of punishment, and other weak and inefficient commonplaces of pagan ethics, or at best borrow some gleams of light and warmth from the example and human sympathy of the Saviour, which shed over the wintry scene nothing better than the glow of a December sun, and cannot break up its frost-bound rigours. While, on the other hand, Romanism, though admitting the Saviour's work on the cross, and even in its hymns celebrating his love, places its votaries at such a distance from its warm breath, behind the freezing barrier of Church rites and works of righteousness, that the impression of gratitude is too faint to melt the heart, and is speedily overcome by the severities of penance, the terrors of purgatory, and the gloom of judgment, which speak a pardon not yet bestowed, a heaven not yet opened up by the shedding of Christ's blood. The fatal postponement of justification in the Romish system is destructive of grateful and childlike obedience. We all know what Luther and others made of the keeping of the law, when under this *régime* of bondage ; and it must be affirmed that the Rationalist's legal hope, and the Romanist's legal terror, are equally destructive of the loving, confiding impulses of true Christian morality. The confession and absolution, too, of the Romish Church turn away the gratitude and confidence of her members from Christ to the priesthood ; and as there is no direct contact

with a holy God in these exercises, their effect, so far from being sanctifying, as all experience testifies, is demoralizing, and relaxes even the hold of the other motives which Romanism still retains.

Look now here once more at the influence of the two false principles on the *moral standard* of Christianity. The tendency of rationalized Christianity has always been to bend the rigidity of the law into accommodation to human weakness. It is no paradox that those divines who have most exalted morality as the alpha and omega of Christianity, have taught a lower morality than the fanatics and enthusiasts who drew their inspiration from the cross. The duties of man to man have been exalted, while the duties of man to God have been forgotten ; and these moral systems have decided many questions of casuistry with a dangerous laxness, which would have been impossible under the light of that awful revelation which comes from Calvary, and under the prompting of that finer moral instinct which is formed in the soul by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Romanism presents, at first sight, a totally opposite spectacle. There is in this religion an apparent renunciation of all terms with the flesh, and an absolute victory over it, as we see in the whole monastic system of mortification and seclusion from the world, together with the vows of celibacy, poverty, and obedience ; and the entire doctrine of saintly perfection and works of

supererogation looks at first blush like the very chivalry of virtue—the moral law carried forward to its heroic and golden age. But alas ! we find here, as everywhere else in the history of superstition, that excess in one quarter implies defect in another. The laity—the vulgar, for whom no such sublime standard is erected—are permitted to rely on the vicarious morality of the saints and the perfected, or more than perfected, ones ; and thus the unity of the moral law, which demands perfect obedience from all, is destroyed ; and further, human nature, unable to sustain itself at the sublime height to which it is carried, falls back into the abyss, and, as the abuses of the monastic system and of enforced celibacy too well attest, the apparent victory over nature ends in a more humiliating defeat. After all, the higher stages of virtue in the Church of Rome are purely imaginary. Works of supererogation cannot exist. It is impossible to pay to God or to man more love than the law demands ; and the very idea that God can be satisfied with less than perfection introduces a fatal laxity into the whole moral system, so that here, as at so many other points the exaggerations of Superstition and the extenuations of Rationalism conspire to one result. I will not, indeed, charge on the *superstition* alone of the Church of Rome the melancholy perversions of morality, which we find in the *policy* of that Church, such as that the end sanctions the means, that no faith is to

be kept with heretics, and that the interests of the Church are paramount to all other laws and obligations. These are the results of worldliness rather than of superstition. Only it cannot be denied that superstition, turning away attention from simple duties to self-imposed forms, making virtues which God never made, setting up one rule for the laity and another for the priesthood, and teaching that the perfections of one class in some sense cover the shortcomings of another,—does thereby confound all right moral distinctions, and opens a door to excesses and atrocities under the mask of religion, which paganism never equalled, and which make the annals of Rome's supremacy, and still more of her contests for pre-eminence, one of the darkest pages in the moral history of the world.

IV. In a few words, I shall complete this sketch by turning your attention to the action of Rationalism and Superstition upon Christianity considered as a system of *association* or *fellowship*. Christianity is not a religion of isolated units, but of masses. Man's nature demands a social religion : and Christianity is the most social of all religions, because it has the noblest centre of attraction, and the most glorious power of gathering all around that centre. The Bible settles *three* great vital questions in regard to the Christian society :—Who shall belong to it, which is the ques-

tion of discipline ; What shall be the relation of its members to one another, which is the question of office or government ; and What their union shall consist in, which is the question of worship. A single glance will show how seriously here, as everywhere, the fundamental arrangements of Christianity have been encroached on or subverted.

Take *first* the question of *discipline*. Christianity requires all saved persons to make a visible profession of their Christianity by joining the Christian society, and ordains that none who appear to be saved shall be excluded. This is the unity of the visible Church, resting on, and pre-supposing the deeper unity of the invisible. Now Rationalism attacks in many cases this position of the need of a visible Church. It is satisfied with silent conviction, and recoils from connexion with any external society, despising forms and positive ordinances, and exalting the invisible at the expense of the visible. This has been, in all ages, the danger of philosophizing Christians. In this spirit the Unitarians, and to some extent the Friends, otherwise remote enough from them, unite ; and of late the Plymouth Brethren have arisen to make this their watchword, and to preach the demolition of the visible Church, as everywhere in a state of apostasy. On the other hand, the Church of Rome, with the uniform tendency of superstition to materialize everything, and to incorporate and intertwine the external

and internal, identifies the visible Church with the invisible, and denies in effect that there are Christians before there is a visible Church. Hence men do not enter the visible Church because they are Christians, but enter it to become so ; and, as a necessary consequence, there is no salvation out of the pale of the Romish Church, and certain salvation to all who remain in her communion, and do not obstruct the efficacy of her rites by mortal sin. The tremendous responsibility thus resting upon the visible Church, which has falsely claimed to be the only birthplace of souls, instead of the nurse of souls already born from above, acting upon the fears of superstition, has led the visible Church to claim such prerogatives as would guarantee salvation, viz., infallibility, sacramental efficacy, and exclusive catholicity. Otherwise there might be saints beyond the pale of the visible Church, or unsaved persons left within it, both of which alternatives were excluded by the supposition. This superstitious exaltation of the visible Church as that to which all true Christians must *belong*, soon changed to the formula as that by which all true Christians must be *made*, is the first fatal error of Romanism, as a Church,—an error generated before Romanism was formed into a system, an error as old as Cyprian in the end of the third century, but which soon developed itself into full-grown Popery, with its exclusiveness, its false uniformity, its assumption of the

divine prerogative to bind and to loose, to shut and to open, not the door of communion on earth only, but what on this theory comes to the same thing, the gate of the kingdom of heaven. Thus while Rationalism slights the visible Church, Superstition all but deifies it ; and both miss its grand ends,—to rally Christians together round a common standard, to display their union to the world, and to enable them to watch over each other's souls, and to walk in love in so far as they are agreed.

Take now the nearly allied question of *office*, or the relation of the members of the Church to one another. According to pure Christianity office rests on spiritual gifts, and is simply the exercise of these, with the consent of the Christian society, for mutual edification. Order and liberty are harmonized in willing subjection to the appointment of Christ, the only head and ruler of His Church. It is the tendency of Rationalism to set aside the appointments of Christ in these matters, to adjust or create offices according to a fancied expediency, or even to hand them over to the control of a worldly power, in return for certain apparent advantages, to the detriment or destruction of the free self-agency of the Christian body, according to the laws of Christ. The extreme of this is Erastianism, and I use the word in no party sense, believing that enlightened Christians everywhere desire to repudiate the thing, though they differ as to

what should be called by the name. Here, again, Romanism exalts, and, by exalting, corrupts, what is essential in Church-office. It is led to this extreme by the doctrine of the visible Church, just developed. The visible Church indeed might wield all its tremendous prerogatives without having any special office-bearers, or at least any permanent ones, like a Committee of Public Safety, which changed its members from time to time. But superstition eagerly lays hold of what is tangible and palpable ; and, as the Christian Church began with the apostles, succeeding office-bearers were exalted to their rank ; the decent form of ordination was transmuted into a magical rite believed to transmit supernatural virtue, and a priesthood thus arose qualified, as the representatives of God, to dispense the salvation which could alone be found in connexion with the visible Church. The superstition of the multitude was wrought upon by representing connexion with the Church as connexion with these office-bearers ; and as the unity ascribed to the Church required a centre in the eyes of superstition to which it might cling as with a death-grasp, the Bishop of Rome, partly from the misunderstood words of our Lord to Peter, and partly from the influence of the metropolis of the world, in which he had his seat, became the vicar of Christ on earth, and that spiritual despotism was consolidated, which made him and his successors the uppermost links in a

grand electric chain of spiritual despotism which sent its vibrations through the heart of every slave of superstition to the extremities of the earth, and was believed to extend also to heaven and hell and the imaginary region that lay between. Thus while Rationalism has slighted Church office, and left it to be tampered with by foreign powers, Romanism has despotically magnified it, so as to transform it from a ministry into a saving priesthood ; at once subverting the prerogatives of Christ, and lording it over his heritage.

Look, finally, to the *worship* of the Church, as exhibiting another field for the agency of these corrupting influences. Christian worship is the expression of devotional feelings to God, and the exhibition of his truth to the world in certain forms appointed by himself, so as to secure the strengthening of right principles in Christians, and the extension of them to others. Rationalism, little alive to the value of such worship, has tended to discourage it by the coldness of its tone, has frowned upon its frequency and fervour, and in some cases mutilated its parts ; as, for example, by denying the permanent obligation of baptism and the Lord's supper, or of the day on which Christian worship is commonly conducted. The Church of Rome, again as before, exalts worship so as to transform and destroy its character. It is not only a means of grace, but, certain extreme con-

tingencies guarded against, the certain channel of grace. To take part in the sacrifice of the mass, the beginning and middle and end of Romish worship, is to perform a saving act. And hence superstition employs in this service all that is imposing and gorgeous to work upon its own feelings, and make itself believe its own illusion. The religious shadow of temples, with the dim light of tapers, the slow and measured movements of priests, the waving of censers, the tinkling of bells, the chanting of solemn music, with the pealing depth of the organ, the awe-struck prostration of every knee, while the symbol of a present deity is raised on high,—all this, in minds prepossessed from their infancy in favour of these rites, must make a strong impression on the sense and imagination, and the natural religious sensibilities, which is almost certain to be mistaken for pure devotion, the more especially that it may contain some better elements. Though the prayers are in an unknown tongue, it too is looked on as sacred and the tongue of the whole Catholic Church ; and, muttered as they are and inaudible to the ear of the worshipper, they are the utterances of mighty and awful beings who have power with God, whose incantations can liberate the dead from penal fires, and whose words of benediction can blot out the darkest sins of the living, not only from the records of conscience, but from the judgment-books of God. Alas ! this splen-

did shadow ! to a superstitious temperament, how fascinating ! what is it but the fabric of a vision, or rather a phantasmagoria, only too grateful to those fallen beings whose interest it is to intercept the personal, intelligent, saving communion of the souls of men with Him who will save men only by light and knowledge, and who, as a Spirit, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth ! Thus, again, Romanism, like Rationalism, misses its aim in worship. The one expects little, and is not disappointed ; the other expects much, unspeakably too much, for, seeking it at the altar, and not at the Bible and the Throne of grace, it stumbles on amid the gloom and shadows of a worse than Levitical economy, and never attains the deep and hallowed joy of those who draw nigh to God ‘with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water.’

I have thus endeavoured, in a very cursory, and, I am afraid, a too general manner, to survey somewhat of the vast field embraced in my subject. I could add many general reflections of a practical nature, of which the topic before me is very suggestive. I shall content myself with two.

First, Let us beware of supposing that Rationalism and Superstition are confined to any school of divines, whether in Germany or England on the one hand, or to Papal countries on the other. Every one of us is

naturally a Rationalist or a Romanist, or a compound of both ; and though we may fancy ourselves perfectly free from it, there is too much of the old leaven still cleaving to us all. I cannot enter into the high denunciatory strain in which Rationalism and Popery have sometimes been attacked, as if they were not so much the sins and errors of men as the works of incarnate demons, which can only be traced to deliberate irreverence, lying, or priestcraft on the part of their abettors. This shows great ignorance of ourselves ; great want of fairness and charity towards our erring brethren ! There may be, and I fear is, much perversity in Rationalism, much priestcraft and conscious tyranny in Romanism. Where these are apparent, let us not shrink from condemning them in appropriate terms, after the example of Him who spared neither Sadducee nor Pharisee. But let us also think of the pride and unbelief of our own minds, and of our own difficulties in embracing some of the doctrines of Christianity ; and let us charitably believe that the Rationalism of not a few may be the ascendancy of similar difficulties not yet in their minds overcome. Let us think of the formalism of our own spirits—of our readiness to trust in external things, in rites, in sacraments, in church privileges—of our remaining distrust of God's love and free grace in Christ ; and let us charitably think that the Romanism of not a few may be the lingering effect of

similar tendencies, in them more powerful, or from which the Spirit of God has not yet set them free. Let us testify against both evils, loudly and earnestly as we will ; but let us speak the truth in love, and in the spirit of Him whose words should never be forgotten—‘ They know not what they do.’ Let the melting tones of compassion and prayer be mingled with the stern controversies of the times in which we live ; and then the witness we bear will not be less acceptable to God, nor less effectual in reclaiming those who are ignorant and out of the way.

Secondly, It is only by the establishment of God’s truth that Rationalism and Superstition can be finally overthrown. As I have already remarked, though mutually repellent, these antagonist powers are not mutually destructive. Errors never totally obliterate each other. That is the prerogative only of truth. It was confidently stated in the end of last century that infidelity had conclusively abolished Popery ; but many have lived to see the formidable reaction which belies all such expectations ; and if any imagine that Popery has now materially diminished the infidelity of the Continent by way of reprisals, they will be equally mistaken. In our own country, as on the Continent, no conclusive victory is to be gained by fighting the battle against Popery with the weapons of mere negation and protest, with such sarcasms of

journalists, and scoffs and mockeries of our lighter literature, as were current during the Papal aggression, and are revived in the present contest with Ultramontanism. These may do valuable political service, may even expel religious error for a time ; but they will not generate Christian faith ; they will not keep the door shut against the return of superstition. Nothing will cure the inevitable tendency of superstitious minds to relapse into error but the pre-occupation and satisfaction of their hearts with the truth ; and if a wide and prayerful diffusion of gospel truth is not attempted in the present struggle against Popery, the tactics of its political antagonists may be triumphant, and we may even seem to overrun the enemy's country and level his strongholds ; but we shall make no stable conquests. Those who expect the downfall of Popery from political combinations and unbelieving reactions against it, without relying on the Bible and the missionary, will once more be disappointed ; and if we wish at last to succeed, we must strive to convert the political recoil of France and Italy into a vital, earnest, and insuppressible religious reformation. Let us cherish interest also in that reaction against Rationalistic Protestantism which has been for years extending itself both in France and Germany. Let us pray for the spread, in the National Churches of these lands, of the revived evangelism which is returning after many aberrations,

not only to the Incarnate Word, but what is more to the written Word ; and seek that the difficulties which the revival is encountering in the land of Luther from a revived sacramentalism and superstition, may also be overcome. Let the Churches of Britain be also prepared for those contests with unbelief at home which have come so unexpectedly upon themselves, and which are so bravely waged by a multitude of loyal defenders of the faith in that Anglican Church where they have begun ; and let them not only strive to conquer in the field of argument, which is comparatively easy, since the champions of Rationalism can only build up their counterfeit temple like Julian out of its own repeatedly blasted ruins, but let them aspire to the more difficult success of reproducing the moral signs and wonders of the Bible before men's eyes, in works of faith and labours of love, which shall prove that the presence of Israel's God is in the midst of us, a pillar of heaven-descended glory, and not an emanation of the desert in which it moves. Thus shall we be equipped in the armour of righteousness on the right hand and the left, and shall not only guard our own lines, but bear the standard of salvation into new territories ; and whatever be the future struggles and reactions of Rationalism and Superstition, and of that kingdom of darkness and error which is wide enough and catholic enough to comprehend them both, we shall

at least do something to accelerate their downfall, and to introduce a happier age, when these shadows shall not as now be cast far and wide over the field of living experience, but shall be reflected only from the dim and fading page of Church history, as the mists and vapours of morning, which the gathering light and heat of pure Christianity has at length dispersed and chased away.

APPENDIX.

STATEMENT for the SOCIETIES referred to in the Preface.

SOCIETY OF SONS OF UNITED PRESBYTERIAN MINISTERS.

(Instituted September 20, 1854.)

OFFICE-BEARERS.

President.

Rev. JAMES HARPER, D.D., Professor of Theology to the U.P. Church.

Vice-Presidents.

Rev. JOHN SMART, D.D., Leith.

Rev. JOHN MACFARLANE, LL.D., Clapham, London.

Honorary Directors.

Rev. WILLIAM ANDERSON, LL.D., Glasgow.

JOHN SCOTT RUSSELL, Esq., F.R.S., London.

JAMES WATSON, Esq. of Rivalsgreen, Linlithgow.

Rev. GEORGE GILFILLAN, Dundee.

ANDREW MUTER, Esq. of Milton, Glasgow.

Rev. R. J. BRYCE, LL.D., Belfast.

H. E. CRUM EWING, Esq. of Strathleven, M.P., Glasgow.

JAMES PEDDIE, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh.

JOHN LOGAN, Esq., Merchant, Glasgow.

Ordinary Directors.

Rev. WM. BRUCE, Edinburgh.

Rev. DAVID M'EWAN, Edinburgh.

WILLIAM LECKIE, Esq., Cashier, Commercial Bank, Edinburgh.

WILLIAM FRASER, Esq., Town-Clerk, Inverkeithing.

JOHN ANDERSON, Esq., Writer, Paisley.

ANDREW ELLIOT, Esq., Publisher, Edinburgh.

ALEXANDER MONCRIEFF, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

JOHN BLACK, Esq., Advocate, Edinburgh.

W. H. M'FARLANE, Esq., Lithographer, Edinburgh.

MUNGO LAUDER, Esq., Merchant, Glasgow.

CHARLES AULD, Esq., M.D., Greenock.
 A. H. BRYCE, Esq., B.A., High School, Edinburgh.
 JOHN GORRIE, Esq., Advocate, 89, Chancery Lane, London.
 Rev. R. S. DRUMMOND, A.M., Glasgow.
 Rev. GEORGE WALLACE, Hull.
 E. ERSKINE HARPER, Esq., Merchant, Leith.
 PETER M'LEOD, Esq., Writer, Glasgow.
 JAMES LOGAN MUIR, Esq., Merchant, Islington, London.
 J. DICK PEDDIE, Esq., Architect, Edinburgh.
 RICHD. G. ROSS, Esq., Engineer, Glasgow.
 JOHN SOMMERVILLE, Esq., Merchant, Leith.
 THOMAS JEFFREY, Esq., Merchant, Edinburgh.
 JAMES THOMSON, Esq., Accountant, Glasgow.

Secretary.

GEORGE M'EWAN, Esq., Advocate, 34, Dundas Street, Edinburgh.

Treasurer.

J. KNOX CRAWFORD, Esq., S.S.C., 9, North St. David Street, Edinburgh.

The Society was instituted at a public meeting called for the purpose, of the Sons of Ministers, held in Edinburgh on 20th September 1854. The considerations in which it originated may be very briefly stated.

The history of the United Presbyterian Church has been one of progress. Throughout many years of political agitation and religious controversy, it has continued to maintain those distinctive principles that incited the small band who gave it its origin. Amidst its growing strength, however, there are relationships which are apt to be broken up and forgotten. Its sons are to be found in every station and in every clime; but although they have been scattered over the world, or separated from the denomination by differences, they must ever feel a pleasure in their early attachment to it. At least such a feeling must remain strong in the hearts of ministers' sons in reference to the Church, and it is well and laudable for those who have so sprung from it, to testify their gratitude by linking themselves in a bond of brotherhood, animated by the common principles of sympathy and benevolence, so that

wherever they may be placed in life, though seas may intervene or schisms separate them, this one connecting tie to their common parent may still subsist. Hence the origin of this Society.

As regards its benevolent object—that of affording pecuniary assistance to the families of ministers deceased or infirm placed in necessitous circumstances—little need be said. Dissenting ministers are far from being a wealthy class. With most it takes frugal care and management to meet the bare comforts and necessities of life ; and therefore it was not matter of surprise that now and again cases of hardship arise, of their children being left to the mercies of the world, with nothing for their support and education. As it was a difficult matter to meet these when they did occur, the provision for them instituted by this Society was at once opportune and commendable. It interfered with none of the schemes of the United Presbyterian Church in operation, and yet the most cursory investigation might convince everybody that it was a desideratum.

The objects of the Society are thus set forth in its constitution.

1. To afford pecuniary assistance to the families of United Presbyterian Ministers, who, by the death or infirmity of the head of the family, may be placed in necessitous circumstances.

2. To promote friendly intercourse among the Members of the Society.

3. To aid, by correspondence and counsel, the younger branches of United Presbyterian Ministers' families in prosecuting their views in life. And, in the event of any General Meeting of the Society deeming the funds sufficient,

4. To institute one or more Scholarships for students who are sons of United Presbyterian Ministers.

Terms of Membership.

The following are admitted as *ordinary* members of the Society on payment of a minimum annual subscription of 5s., or a payment of not less than £5, which constitutes life membership, viz. :—

1. Sons of Ministers of the United Presbyterian Church.
2. Grandsons of do.
3. Sons-in-Law of do.

Strangers are admitted as *extraordinary* members, on payment of not less than £5 ; but the office-bearers are chosen from the ordinary members.

Operations of the Society.

Since its formation, the Society has steadily increased its membership, and there are now on the roll 245 members.

The permanent capital fund now amounts to about £1500, £1300 of which is invested in heritable security.

The annual income from subscriptions and interest on capital exceeds £100 ; but, in terms of the constitution, a large portion of the income must be applied in increasing the capital until it amount to the sum of £5000. Although the annual distribution for benevolent purposes is thus limited in the meantime, the Directors have for several years disbursed the sum of £30 annually.

By means of social meetings, conversaziones, etc., the Society is instrumental in promoting friendly intercourse among the members.

GLASGOW SOCIETY OF SONS OF MINISTERS OF THE
UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

OFFICE-BEARERS,
1862-63.

Preses.

JAMES MITCHELL, Writer, Glasgow.

Vice-Preses.

FORREST FREW, Manufacturer, Glasgow.

Secretary.

JAMES BURNS KIDSTON, Writer, 50, West Regent Street, Glasgow.

Treasurer.

HUGH HEUGH, Merchant, 41, St. Vincent Place, Glasgow.

Ordinary Directors.

ANDREW MUTER of Milton.

JOHN MEIKLEHAM, Clyde Iron Works.

ROBERT JEFFRAY WALKER, Merchant, Glasgow.

GEORGE M'FARLANE, Accountant, Glasgow.

JOHN KIDSTON, Writer, Glasgow.

GEORGE ROBSON, Accountant, Glasgow.

WM. M'EWEN, Merchant, Glasgow.

GEORGE COVENTRY DICK, Commission Agent, Glasgow.

ALEX. HENDERSON M'LEAN, Tea Merchant, Glasgow.

HUGH MONCRIEFF, Writer, Glasgow.

The objects intended to be served by this Society, and the sentiments in which it originated, will be learned from the following extracts from an address issued in pursuance of the resolutions of a meeting of Sons of Ministers, held on 10th April 1854, when it was agreed that a Society should be formed in Glasgow :—

‘Our Church contains three Bodies, long separate but now united. We have cause to rejoice that in all their divisions they ever maintained the one great Head of the Church, and the liberty of its members, His body. Many of us can recollect the time when each of the three Bodies composing the United Pres-

byterian Church was a separate Body. In these small communions every minister was the intimate friend of nearly every other, and ministers' families were hereditary friends.

‘These days are gone, and have left behind them feelings which can now be thoroughly appreciated by but a few. Let us only hope, as we truly believe, that what we have lost in the almost family intercourse which subsisted among the Ministers of our separate churches, is more than compensated by our union. The feelings of those among us who are more advanced in life are indeed changed, but only changed to be enlarged so as to embrace a greater number of those who hold the same faith and entertain the same hope.

‘The Sons of Ministers of the United Presbyterian Church in Glasgow are now numerous, and we think the time has come when they should, by the formation of an Association of their own, follow the example set to them by the Sons of Ministers of the Church of Scotland.

‘It is hardly necessary to plead, when speaking of Scotland, that Glasgow ought to be the seat of such a Society. Whether there should be kindred associations in other towns, it is for the Sons of Ministers resident in such towns to decide. But, obviously, the industrial capital of Scotland must continue to be the resort of young men having their way to make in life. Our Ministers have ever, out of their scanty means, striven to give their sons a good education. With such education, and personally maintaining in its purity, the religion taught in their fathers' homes, they may well be expected to succeed in such a city. But they are often subjected to difficulties in finding employment, and must feel the want of that counsel and kindness which, we trust, will now be supplied by those who have trod the path before them.’

Constitution.

Some time after the issuing of this address, the Society was constituted. Its object and purpose, as declared by the constitution, is to contribute to the benefit of the families (children and widows), and to the advancement in life of children of ministers of the United Presbyterian Church, or of any of the churches comprised in that body, and that by friendly sympathy, counsel, and moral influence, as well as by pecuniary aid, in circumstances in which it is required, so far as the funds of the Society will admit.

While the support of the Society is open to all, and all are invited to contribute to its funds, its membership is confined to Sons of Ministers. Life membership is constituted by the contribution of five guineas to the funds, and from the life members the Board of Directors is selected. With the view of interesting in the Society Sons of Ministers who may not for the time be in a condition to become members, it was some time ago agreed to admit, as associates, such Sons of Ministers as might contribute five shillings annually to the funds. These associates have the privilege of being present at general meetings of the Society, and thus have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with its members.

Operations of the Society.

The permanent capital amounts to £2300, and there is a balance of cash on hand.

Besides the important object of making the Sons of Ministers known to and helpful of each other in the intercourse and business of life, the Society has, though to a less extent than the Directors desired, afforded pecuniary aid, either stated or incidental, in various cases where it was much needed and highly

appreciated. Their disbursements in this way were £30 in the first year, £44 in the second, £55 in the third, £75 in the fourth, £60 in the fifth, and they have already been £118 in the sixth year, which is now current.

Conclusion to the Statements for both Societies.

While there is an obvious delicacy and propriety in the Sons of Ministers administering the affairs of such associations as the above, the duty of *supporting them* is not more incumbent on them than on other members of the Church. To not a few of these, both associations owe a debt of gratitude, and the Directors feel assured that in aiding the Societies whose claims are above set forth, the members of our Church generally would acceptably and beneficially show their appreciation of and sympathy with our excellent ministry.

The Directors of both Societies request the ministers of our Church each to accept the accompanying copy of Dr. Cairns' Discourse, with this Appendix, intended to make known the existence, extend the operations, and enlarge the resources of these Societies. They cannot close these remarks without stating how deeply they feel indebted to Dr. Cairns for his admirable discourse, the publication of which, they are persuaded, will be beneficial not only to the Societies at whose request it is published, and to the United Presbyterian Church, but to the Church of Christ at large.

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